

State (NLK-73-30)

BY MED NARS, DATE 8/23/77

C O P Y

S/S 7652

May 10, 1961

CONFIDENTIAL

To: The Acting Secretary

Through: S/S

From: ARA - Mr. Coerr

Subject: Whether or Not to Attempt to Exclude Cuba from the Economic and Social Meeting

The attached memorandum (Tab A) sets forth major political and technical considerations. My recommendation is that we make no effort to exclude Cuba from the meeting for the following reasons:

We could exclude Cuba only by taking the lead immediately in precipitating a showdown with the Latin American Governments on the question of action against Cuba.

To require a showdown on attendance at the first ministerial meeting to initiate action on the Alliance for Progress would, if successful, make that meeting appear a U. S. political instrument in the cold war. It would place the Latin American Governments in a position of having to declare themselves politically against Castro in order to become eligible for U.S. economic benefits. It is precisely by spreading this image that the Castro communists have been attacking the Alliance for Progress.

Should we attempt to exclude Cuba, we would appear fearful of a direct confrontation with Cuba on the Alliance for Progress. Conversely, should we calmly permit their attendance, our attitude would be regarded as a sign of strength. Should the Cubans come to the meeting, they would have to take a destructive position toward a multilaterally supported constructive endeavor. They may not wish to accept this challenge even if they could.

Should we be victorious in excluding the Cubans we would thereby shift the U.S.-Communist battlefront from the conference, where we would have the advantage, to the continent where we would have given the Communists the advantage.

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With regard to security, I believe that for the United States to exclude the Cubans from the meeting would so effectively identify it as a U.S.-dominated instrument in the cold war that the Castro communists in Uruguay would be more able to arouse popular hostility than they would if the Cubans were to attend as participants.

With regard to the possible attendance by President Kennedy, the successful exclusion of Cuba might eliminate a confrontation between the President and a Cuban with full status on the floor of the meeting, but would by no means prevent Castro, or his representatives, from being present in Montevideo in an advantageous position to make things as difficult as possible and to inspire anti-U.S. demonstrations against the President. Recognizing the risks of prediction on such matters, I believe that the President and the United States would win political success should Castro compete with him in the meeting. We have working for us a "Kennediamo" that is our best answer to Fideliamo.

I believe that we have much more to gain in holding the meeting with Cuban attendance than without.

Should it develop that security considerations impel us to recommend against the President's attendance, I believe we nevertheless have much to gain in holding the meeting in Latin America at the ministerial level as the best means of launching the Alliance for Progress.

Attachments:

1. Tab A. Memorandum.

cc: B - Mr. Ball
S - Mr. Berle
S/O - Mr. Achilles
White House - Mr. Goodwin

ARA/WDCoerr:bk:jk